
AN ESSAY
ON THE
Merits of Catholic Emancipation,
&c.

BY
SIR JAMES FOULIS, BART.

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AN ESSAY
ON
THE MERITS
OF
Catholic Emancipation,

IN THE FORM OF
A SPEECH,
Feigned to have been pronounced
IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

WRITTEN,
PRO BONO PUBLICO,
By Sir JAMES FOULIS, Bart.

Nullum Numen abest, si sit Prudentia.

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Essay was composed in the months of
May and June last.*

November, 1812.

The following to be added to the Note in page 7:—

“ But the above is not intended to carry any reflexion injurious to the characters of those men, who, though possessing religious and moral principles, are engaged, in his service, contrary to their inclinations, through direful necessity, and the irresistible circumstances of the times.”

AN ESSAY,

&c.

MY LORDS,

IT is not without considerable diffidence in my own feeble abilities, that I now presume to address your Lordships, and my Brother Peers, on the present most important subject of our serious discussion. On no other occasion have I ventured to do so: this is the first time, and perhaps it may be the last; for I am no Orator; and I am far from being fond of hearing myself speak.

May I, My Lords, crave your indulgence as well as your attention; I feel that I shall most certainly require indulgence; and, certain I am, the subject now before this House, deserves the utmost attention that can possibly be dedicated to it, by the patriotic and loyal minds of a British House of Peers.

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The claims of the Irish Catholics form no Party Question. They constitute a great Constitutional and Political Question, of the most vital importance to the State, and to the prosperity and happiness of the Subjects. Fully convinced of this self-evident truth, I feel persuaded that I shall be listened to with patience, however deficient I may be in talents and eloquence ; and even though my reasonings, and conclusions, should not be so fortunate as to obtain unanimous approbation.

Before I proceed farther, I hold it incumbent on me to assure your Lordships, that there is not the slightest tint of party-spirit existing in my mind ; nor have I any political connexion with any political party, in or out of this House.

Stimulated by an irresistible sense of the duty which I owe to my King and Country, in the present never before heard of state of the European world, I have overcome every reluctance that strove to deter me from offering my opinions as an object of public notice and criticism.

But I have done with apologies, My Lords, and will now begin to treat my subject with all the method I am capable of ; and I say,

Let us extend before us the Map of Europe,
and

and turn our eyes towards the Continent. What do we behold, My Lords! Potentates dethroned, whose dynasties had reigned, for hundreds of years, over their respective nations; and new men, covered with crimes and infamy, placed upon their thrones. Republics dissolved, and converted into monarchies, or great military governments, under pretence of incorporation with the Empire of France. Kings, and Princes, retaining nominal rank, but without power, clanking, indignantly, the chains by which they have been attached to the Iron Crown of the most inflexible, unfeeling Tyrant, that ever wielded a Sceptre over the Nations of the Earth !

What do we behold ! Commerce in fetters — sick and languid, and threatened with annihilation in all its bearings. Commerce ! whose Golden Chain has, for many ages, linked Nation to Nation, and Individual to Individual, by the strong and endearing ties of friendship and mutual interest ; and which has contributed, perhaps, more effectually than all the exertions of moral philosophy, to soften and polish the minds and manners of men, by bringing them into more immediate moral contact with each other, than could, otherwise, have possibly been done, by

mere speculative dissertations and aphorisms. Nay, My Lords, I am almost tempted to say, that Commerce has done more, in this way, than even the Christian Religion itself has hitherto effected. But I attribute no blame to the Religion of Christ, because I am thoroughly convinced, that if every human being were really and truly a Christian in his heart, and conduct, this world would, from that moment, become a species of Paradise ; in which we would have only physical evils to contend with ; the unavoidable lot of our present connexion with perishable material organization. And even these, I am of opinion, in such a state of religious morality, would become less afflictive than they are at present ; because the human mind would be supported under their pressure, by the beneficent intervention of GOD, through the consoling medium of religious Fortitude, Resignation, and Hope.

But I must blame, My Lords, the criminal temerity of ambitious Political Jugglers, and of wild Enthusiasts ; who have, by their speculative opinions, corrupted the pure and simple tenets of Scripture to mislead their fellow-creatures ; and flatter their own sinful vanity, by becoming heads of religious sects ; and, thus,

thus, creating division, enmity and contention amongst the members of the Christian Church, where unanimity and mutual indulgence ought exclusively to prevail.

In some cases I may pity the Enthusiast; but in no case can I pardon the ambitious Politician, who, to serve his own petty temporary interests, presumes to fly in the face of his God, and to make Religion a stalking-horse, or mask, to cover his selfish designs, by flattering, at the expense of every principle that ought to be held sacred, the prejudices and pride of any peculiar sect, to the detriment of others; by using the powers of human Legislation to exclude any of the subjects of the Crown from those imprescriptible Political and Civil Rights, which the Constitution grants to every member of the Civil Association over which it presides, on account or pretence of their religious faith or mode of worship. This is a copious subject, and many things might be added to what I have said.

But, leaving it for the present, let us again return to the gloomy map, over which we were travelling; and what do we behold!— Above fifty millions of men, discontented and unhappy; compressed together (their souls and minds in thraldom), by the almost irre-

sistible powers of a man, born in indigence, educated by charity, and suddenly raised to the very highest pinnacle of Sovereign Power, by means the most flagitious and unprincipled that can possibly be conceived, in consequence of a revolution, the most extraordinary by its nature, and the most fatal by its effects, that ever convulsed the Moral, or desolated the Physical World, since the beginning of time.

It is not, My Lords, my intention to delineate the woeful rise, or the hideous progress, of that Religious, Moral, and Political Revolution, that took place some years ago in France. All those scenes of horror, by which it was characterized, are too recent, too glaring, and too impressive, to make it possible that they should not be as present in your Lordships' recollection as they are in my own: it would, therefore, be folly to attempt a recapitulation of those more than Satanical transactions, that have stamped our common Nature, and the Christian Era, with indelible dishonour and disgrace. I only wish they could be blotted out from the annals of the present times, and immediately sink into the darkest recess of oblivion, that they might not be handed down, as historical facts, to future generations.

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My Lords, as I think it essentially connected with the subject of our discussion, the most anxious wish of my heart is to call your attention to the baneful tendency of that disastrous catastrophe, of the French Revolution, which has placed that wonderful Man on the throne of the Bourbons ; in whose profligate mind, the lives, or happiness of hundreds of thousands of his fellow-creatures, would fly up and kick the beam, were the slightest object of his inordinate ambition to be thrown into the opposite scale. His ambition is voracious and insatiable ; and threatens the total subversion of the world ; and the reduction of the whole human race, to a slavish submission to *his* will and pleasure. The Sovereign and the Slave, the Rich and the Poor, the Good Man and Wicked, are equally the objects of his contempt or hatred ; and only obtain a share in his estimation, so far as they are qualified to act as instruments in his hands, to promote his nefarious designs :* consequently, the unprincipled villain, endowed with talents, is the only human being who attracts his regard, or battens in his favour. He seems to have said

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* He has withdrawn his protection from his brothers Lucien and Louis, because they would not blindly promote his criminal projects of aggrandisement.

in his heart, ‘ God may reign in Heaven, if he pleases ; but this world shall be mine :— And the rapidity of his desolating progress has hitherto been, in a great measure, commensurable with the vastness of his purpose.

Let us once more return to the Map of Europe : Look at it, My Lords, with all the attention you are capable of giving to so important and interesting a survey.—Now, My Lords, tell me the truth ; What do you see ? and how do you feel ?---For my part, with tears in my eyes (of sorrow and indignation, but not of despair), I see, on the one hand, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Denmark, and Holland, lying prostrate at the feet of Napoleon ; internally cursing his existence, and wishing him at the Devil ; wishing for the restoration of the former order of things, without daring to express their wishes. And I behold them, at the same time, as if they were under the influence of witchcraft, crowding around his standards ; and, associated with numberless hordes of truculent banditti, contributing by their numbers, their physical strength and exertions, to the overthrow and enslavement of those few nations who, faithful to their God, and their allegiance to their Princes, have flown to arms, in defence of every

every thing that can be dear to the heart of man, on this side of eternity, against the ruthless progress of that Autocratic Despot NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

On the other hand, Spain, Portugal, and Sicily, three secondary Powers, standing on the defensive, supported and protected by Great Britain, present themselves to our contemplation as objects of anxiety mingled with hope. Russia, likewise, begins to awake out of her delusive dream of fancied security, and confidence in the promises of the Tyrant; and after having imprudently, at his instigations, wasted her strength in a useless, unmeaning, impolitical contest with Sweden and Turkey, she has begun to concenter her diminished armies, on the frontiers of Poland, to fight for her own existence, as an independent nation, against that treacherous Ally, of whose amicable disposition she had so frequently and foolishly boasted, ever since she entered into the insidious Treaty of Tilsit. She did not then perceive the deep laid plan of systematic policy, with which Napoleon was preparing, and paving the routes, by which he intended entering, as a conqueror, the capitals of the Russian and Mahometan Empires; it never once entered into the minds of the Czar or
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the Grand Seignior, that instead of fighting their own battles, on the banks of the Danube; they were, in reality, in blind subservience to his designs, reciprocally wasting each other's strength, and laying each other's country open, to the invasions of the modern Attila ; who only awaits the proper opportunity to pounce upon his prey, when he thinks he has it at his mercy. In haughtiness of mind, and in deliberate cruelty, he fully equals the King of the Hunns ; but he far exceeds him in subtle sagacity, and systematic desolation. But, still, it is not impossible that a modern Ætius may be raised up, by God, in his mercy ; and the furious progress of the modern Attila be brought to a stand, long before he could possibly attain his darling ultimate object, Universal Domination.

The views and principles of that Soldier of Fortune, who, in the character of Crown Prince, regulates the movements of the Swedish Nation, are to us unknown. Will he preserve a good understanding with Alexander ? and, bona fide, confederate with us, on the breaking out of the approaching war between his old master and the Russian Empire ? and attempt becoming an independent Sovereign ? Or will he content himself with a precarious

precarious political existence; under the capricious protection of the Emperor of France, and promote his designs by harassing Russia, under the pretext of recovering Finland? What are his intentions I will not pretend to fathom. The whole of his conduct, since his arrival in Sweden, and of Napoleon's, with respect to him, have been wrapt up in a cloud of mystery, which must have excited suspicion and distrust in the minds of men capable of reflection, which can only be removed or confirmed by the hand of time, and future occurrences. But I cannot help expressing a wish that, animated by a spirit of independence, he may determinately throw his military talents, and political abilities, into the same scale with those who are fighting under the banners of Liberty, Honour, and Virtue, in the glorious cause of National Independence. The geographical position of Sweden would render the Crown Prince's talents an acquisition of the highest importance and utility, to the noble cause in which we are engaged.

Now, My Lords, I have finished this our bird's-eye view of Continental Europe, over which we have passed with, perhaps, too rapid a flight: But I did not think it advisable

able to wear out your patience, by entering into all the minutiae that might be necessary to fill up, and complete, the horrid picture of Human Ambition, Human Depravity, and Human Misery; the outlines of which I have had the presumption, with a coarse and unexperienced pencil, to present to your mental eye, as an object deserving your most serious contemplation, and reflection.

Methinks it is now full time, My Lords, to return home, and cast a scrutinizing eye over the Military strength, the Religious, Moral, and Political state, of the British Isles. But here, I fairly confess, I find myself so deeply im-mazed, and perplexed, by the multiplicity, intricacy, and importance of the subjects which crowd upon my mind, and which I must necessarily discuss, as they almost all bear, directly, on the very core of the Question now before this House, that I could willingly relinquish the task I have undertaken, if I thought it might be done consistently with that sacred Duty, which I owe to My King, and My Country, as a Subject, and a Peer of the Realm. Besides, My Lords, as Religious and Moral Agents, I believe it to be incumbent upon us, individually and collectively, to endeavour to contribute

tribute all we can, though it should be only a mite, to the happiness and welfare of all our fellow-creatures. And I must add, that, in the actual glorious and conspicuous attitude which Great Britain has assumed, and maintains, in the present desperate Contest, I somehow or other feel a conviction in my own mind, that not only the permanency of the British Empire, and the preservation of the British Constitution, but the future happiness, and prosperity of, at least, the European World, do hinge, more or less, on the legislative Resolution, which Your Lordships may come to before we retire, this night, each to his own home.

But still I hesitate ; nay, I even shrink from my bold and complicated enterprize ; I doubt my ability to handle my subject with that perspicuous detail, and dignity, which it deserves, and requires ; I doubt my own capacity to arrange, in proper order, all the multifarious heads and ramifications which it contains ; I doubt my being possessed of language to express, with clearness, brevity, and energy, the ideas and notions I have formed, and wish to communicate, so as to bring them to bear on the Catholic Question, within the narrow compass of one essential point

point of view, and definite conclusion. My wish is to inform, not to mislead or amuse. I will not pretend to lead Your Lordships on a party of pleasure; through the variegated flowery fields of specious oratory. A plain understanding, a loyal heart, sincerity of intention, and common language, are the only qualifications I dare presume to attribute to myself. These circumstances being now understood, I once more throw myself on Your Lordships' indulgence.

Great Britain, to which we have at last returned from our continental excursion, presents to the view of the Philosopher, and the Statesman, one of the rarest and most delectable political phenomena, that history has, as yet, recorded in the annals of the human race—a Great Nation living under a Constitution of Government, that involves in itself, as its principle and essence, the sacred, genuine seeds of Rational Liberty, Political and Civil.

A Constitution, whether in a physical or political sense, may be defined to be the adaption or fitness of distinct parts to each other, so as to form an organized whole; whose combined faculties, or powers, are calculated to produce certain previously pur-
posed,

posed, general effects; on the regular production of which, its own health and stability depend. The slightest deviation from its natural combined operations introduces disease; which, if not attended to in time, and expelled, will certainly terminate, sooner or later, according to its degree of virulence, in ultimate dissolution. This I believe to be a position, which no man will venture to contradict. I wish You, My Lords, to carry it along with you, in your recollection, because it is the basis of an argument which I shall soon have occasion to make use of.

The British Constitution is a noble and simple machine. It consists in the combination of all the different interests of the Community, in every act of Legislation, by means of the division of the property of the land into three great political orders and deliberative bodies—the King, the Lords, and the Commons: and in the separation of these, in the management of public affairs, into two different but connected powers—the Legislative and Executive. The Executive power is vested in the King, the Supreme Head of the Community. The Crown forms a Constitutional Corporation, possessed of the highest privileges, and prerogatives, that are consistent

consistent with the Liberties of the Subject. The Person of the Sovereign is sacred and inviolable; liable to no responsibility. He cannot therefore execute, in person, any of the functions of the executive administration; as to that administration the strictest responsibility is attached. His executive authority is, consequently, in all its operative ramifications, delegated to men, who, as subjects, are amenable to the laws of the land, and under the control of parliament. The Criminal and Civil codes, and the regulations of police, are carried into execution by Judges of different denominations; Justices of the Peace, Magistrates of Boroughs, and Towns; and their respective subaltern officers. The Sheriff is an officer of the highest antiquity and dignity; he is the executive power in the several counties; and is, to the Lower Courts, what the King is to the High Court of Parliament; and, while in office, takes precedence, in his own county, over the Peers themselves, as, there, he represents the person of the Sovereign. Trial by Jury is incorporated with, and forms a most essential part of, the Constitution.

The internal and external Political Interests of the Nation, are committed to the management

ment of the immediate servants of the Crown, under the general appellation of Ministers. The King has a Constitutional Right to appoint any indefinite number of Privy Counsellors, with whom he must deliberate and advise, on all matters of state; for to act of himself, would be a violation of that tenure by which he enjoys personal inviolability, and would sow the seeds, from which despotism might begin to grow, and gradually gain strength, unless timely checked by the intervention of Parliament, or legal insurrection. Ministers are advisers of the Crown, not merely as Ministers, but as Privy Counsellors. What is called a Cabinet Council, is not known to the Constitution; and ought to have no communication with the Crown, but through the Privy Council. The Peers are hereditary Counsellors of the Crown, and have individually a right to demand an audience, when they may have any advice to offer to his Majesty.

The House of Commons, collectively, have also a right to advise the Crown, by an open address, presented by a deputation of their own body. They cannot do so individually, because, being a delegated body, and each representing only a certain number of the people,

ple, it is only their collective voice that can represent the whole body of their constituents, and approach the Throne in their name.

The Crown, as the representative of the Nation, has an undefined right to manage all political transactions with foreign Powers; because in these, till such time as they are finally brought to a conclusion, the reciprocal interests of the states commonly demand the profoundest secrecy; but, when concluded, the treaties formed by the contracting powers must be laid before Parliament; and the responsibility of Ministers commences. During the currency of Negotiations it is certainly unconstitutional and imprudent for Parliament to interfere, unless there exist strong grounds for suspicion of treason, or treachery, in Ministers. In this, the Prerogative of the Crown, and the Liberty of the Press, seem to bear a striking analogy.

I have not completed the picture of the Constitution; many prominent features, requisite to exhibit it in its full beauty, and political magnificence, are still wanting; but, if I mistake not, I have proceeded as far as is necessary for my present purpose, which is, to demonstrate to this House, and to the Nation at large, that the Principle, Construction,

struction, and natural Operation of the British Constitution, have no other object, or tendency, than the widest possible diffusion of Civil Liberty, and Political Rights, among the Individuals who compose the National Community, that may not be inconsistent with the safety of the State, and the prosperity of the Empire, without entangling itself with exceptions, on account of Religious Tenets, Doctrines, or Discipline. It acts solely, in a moral and political capacity, for the temporal advantage of civil society. It is far from being so irreligiously presumptuous, as to interfere with conscience in matters concerning religious Faith. It acknowledges the independent sacred rights of conscience, as the vicegerent of God, in the minds of men, over which no human authority can prevail. It knows that to preach proselytism, to any one sect of the many into which the Christian Religion is actually subdivided, by means of temporal rewards and punishment, is to fly in the face of a fundamental principle of the Christian Institution, and a positive declaration of its Divine Author. It knows, from the same high and incontrovertible authority, that the Father exclusively can give faith, and that the Christian Faith consists in believ-

ing that Christ is the promised Redeemer, who came into the world; assumed human nature in the flesh; and died upon the Cross a voluntary Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World; to reconcile the justice of God with his mercy; to do away the direful effects of the sentence of death, which mankind had incurred, by the disobedience of their first parents; and to open the gates of a happy immortality, to the righteous believers, by his resurrection from the grave, and glorious ascension to Heaven. It knows that St. Paul, in his fourteenth chapter to the Romans, has distinctly declared, that God is so paternally indulgent to his weak, fallible creatures, as not to be offended at such non-essential *credenda* as they, thro' superstition or prejudice, may add to these essential articles of faith, for the regulation of their own religious observance, providing that, while they hold them sacred, they conscientiously adhere to them in their conduct; and that he enjoins those, who may differ from their brethren in these, or similar notions, to treat them with all the indulgence of Christian Charity; and without the slightest attempt to oppose or impede their practice, either by ridicule or coercion.

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From the British Constitution the British Legislature derives no right to legislate on matters of Religion. Religion may be considered as a Spiritual Freehold, held, by every individual, immediately of God, totally independent of any Civil Power whatever. The moral conduct of the subjects with respect to each other; of the subjects with respect to the Government; and of the Government with respect to the subjects; are, unquestionably, the exclusive objects of internal Legislation. To which may be added Commercial and Revenue Regulations, which are only of a temporary nature, and depend upon mutable circumstances.

Crime, and not religious tenets, is the only cause that can justify exclusion from civil and political rights, on Constitutional Principles.

If the Political and Religious Data I have here laid down, are so fortunate as to be admitted by your Lordships as near approximations to truth, and I fairly confess that, in my mind, they have assumed all the rights and privileges of Axioms, how widely must our Legislature have wandered, from Constitutional and Christian Principles, in their legislative excluding enactments, with respect to their

Catholic and Dissenting Brethren and fellow-subjects on both sides of St. George's Channel !

The penal and disqualifying Codes, and Test Acts, have no coincidence or connexion with political wisdom, or religious principle ; and ought to be repealed. They are replete with danger to the State ; and fatal to religious Unanimity. Let these Laws be erased from our Statute Books, and all the Subjects enjoy, indiscriminately, the beneficent influence of the Constitution, and you will soon see religious animosities subside, and every heart, as well as every hand, raised in support of our common cause, with a strength and energy, that will proudly set at defiance every attempt, however strenuous, and from whatever quarter it may come, to conquer our country, or subvert our Government ; because every individual will then have a common, and a real interest in their preservation.

Under the actual monopoly of political power and privileges, all those who partake in it, from the Throne to the meanest Peasant who toils and labours for his daily bread, must feel an enthusiastic interest in the Commonwealth ; while those who do not, and live obnoxious to the unconstitutional Laws, which have,

have, at different periods, been enacted against them on pretence of their differing in certain articles of their religious Creed, and form of worship, from that of the Church, the Party in power, had adopted and connected with the State, must, if they are not beasts, void of reason and human feelings, look up to those who bask in the Constitutional sunshine, at least with corroding envy, if not with hatred, and ardently wish for a change in their own favour.

Now, my Lords, let us recollect that we have, at this very moment of time, fully one fourth of our population, who, under the denomination of Catholics, are placed, by the law, in that state of seclusion from the Constitution, which I have above described: and who, tho' the law cannot fail keeping their minds in a state of constant irritation, not only live obedient to the law, but crowd round our standards, fight our battles, and gain our victories, without the slightest hope of rising, in reward of their noble exertions and essential services, to any of the dignified situations, or lucrative employments, either in the Civil or Military lines of advancement.

Can these men be considered as immoral? or their religion as disloyal?—I declare, my Lords, in the most solemn manner, in the

presence of our common God, whom we all acknowledge and adore, to this House, and to the whole world, that I think they would have burst out, as mere rational and sentient beings, long ere this, into criminal excesses against the State, had they not been restrained by a strong sense of moral and religious obligation, and the fond allurements of fostering hope; a hope which has been, for some years past, wisely encouraged, by legislative concessions; and which, in the actual state of internal and external circumstances, it would be little short of madness to disappoint.

Here let us pause, my Lords, and let us give ourselves up, for a few moments, to serious reflection on this subject, of the most serious importance that ever was, perhaps, discussed within these walls.

Now, my Lords, I could wish to ask, to whom are we chiefly indebted for the beneficent Constitution I have attempted to delineate?—Was not the British Constitution originally conceived in the mind, and, gradually, brought forward to maturity, by our Roman Catholic Ancestors, wading, for successive ages, thro' a stubborn series of sanguinary struggles, in defence of the subjects' rights, against the boldest pretensions, and pertinacious encroachments of Regal Power? And this,

this, long before protestantism had entered into the minds of men, which now pretends to an exclusive right of enjoying the protection, and comforts, of that stupendous political fabric, the Roman Catholic Religion had reared, in despite of every opposition and difficulty.

Were they not our Roman Catholic Ancestors who enabled those Princes, who had sense and courage, to resist the irreligious temporal usurpations of the Roman Pontiffs, in the very zenith of their power and influence? Nay, who shook off the Roman Yoke, when some of our weak and wicked Princes had basely submitted to it their Crown and Kingdom? and this at a time when ignorance and grovelling superstition, inseparable companions, were prevalent throughout Europe? —The spirit of Independence is an inherent virtue in the British mind. It ought never to be depressed. There never was a time in which it was more urgently necessary to cultivate and encourage it, by every possible means, than this in which we live.

Were they not our Catholic Ancestors who obtained our *Magna Charta*? and our *Confirmatio Cartarum*?

Were they not our Catholic Ancestors who, with a stern and threatening voice, declared,
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in the presence of their Monarch, *Nolumus Leges Angliae mutare?*

Were they not our Catholic Ancestors, who drew their swords, and thundered in the ears of their King, We know our Rights; by these we obtained, and with these we will maintain them?

If all this is truth, (and I verily believe there is no man, acquainted with English history, who will have the audacity to insinuate, that I have not derived my information from authentic records), is there any man, in his right senses, who will, in this enlightened age, attempt to persuade us that the Catholic Religion is inimical to our glorious Constitution; and that it would be dangerous to re-admit within its pale those of our fellow-subjects who still adhere to its tenets and forms of worship, for no other ostensible cause than their being Roman Catholics; and, with the majority of European Christians, holding the Bishop of Rome to be the spiritual head of their church?

Let me add, my Lords, what I can aver, from my own knowledge, to be a fact, that it is only in spirituals, the Roman Catholics of the present day admit, in the See of Rome, any right to the exertions of the Papal Powers.

Powers. All the pretensions, encroachments, and usurpations of the papal over the secular power that occurred in former times, are considered by them, to have really been the irreligious acts of ambitious individuals, unsupported or countenanced by any tenet in the Catholic Creed, or any Canon of the Catholic Church.

History plainly evinces, that the principle of having a right to supreme power over other states than their own, and even of becoming at all temporal sovereigns, was first suggested and excited, in the papal mind, by the criminal views, and selfish interests, of ambitious usurpers, in the ages of ignorance and mental obscurity ; who solicited the Popes to sanction their usurpations, in order to conciliate and ensure the allegiance and fidelity of their recently acquired superstitious subjects, to the seclusion of their dethroned sovereigns, and their families.

It was continued and kept alive, during a series of successive ages, by Princes resorting to the spiritual influence of the Roman Court, to promote their own wicked designs against their neighbours, rivals, and competitors ; and, in return for their kind offices, the territories of the Popes, as secular sovereigns, were successively augmented by grants, and

and cessions of enormous extent. This circumstance led them out of their proper sphere. They began to act in a double capacity. They forgot that their Master, whose Vicegerents they hold themselves to be, had declared that his kingdom was not of this world. They thought that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush; and they, sinfully, rendered their Spiritual Influence subservient to their Temporal Aggrandisement.

But, even in those dark ages, the Roman Catholic world was not so totally blind, as not to be able, sometimes, to distinguish between the Court, and the See of Rome, and successfully to oppose, in arms, the Temporal Sovereign of Rome, while they professed obedience to his Spiritual Authority. History informs us, that in the 13th century, and in the very heart of Italy, the Gibelins, under the Imperial banners, fought many bloody battles against the Guelfs, who had embraced the temporal interests of the Roman Court; and set at defiance the impotent thunders of the Vatican. Many other instances might be enumerated of a similar nature, but I wish not to tire your patience with any unnecessary exhibition of my historical knowledge, as I hold this fact sufficient to prove my position

tion—that it never was received as an article of religious Faith by the Catholic Church, that the Popes possessed, *jure divino*, temporal authority over the secular power.

The acquisition of temporal power, in the hands of our spiritual guides, has constantly proved unfavourable to the true interests of the Christian Religion; so far as my observation has been able to carry me. However mistaken I may be, I cannot help suspecting that the wealth with which Ecclesiastical Establishments have been endowed, by mistaken zeal and devotion, has in many instances, I do not say universally, been very detrimental.—But I am wandering from my subject.

If in the 13th century, the thunders of the Vatican neither cooled the courage of the Catholic Gibelins, nor shook their religious faith, nor withdrew them from their allegiance to their temporal sovereign, notwithstanding their devotional veneration of the Pope, in his spiritual capacity, it is not to be supposed that, in this enlightened age, Catholics will be less faithful to their temporal Sovereign, than they were in those times, when all the ingenuity of Italian Ecclesiastical Policy was employed, to establish the delusive doctrine of the

the double universal supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. This, at present, and for many years past, is so far from being the case, that the Rights of the Secular Power, and the real extent of the Spiritual Authority, are as accurately ascertained, and defined, in books of Catholic Classical Divinity, as are the prerogatives of the Crown, and the rights of British subjects, in our Bill of Rights, and Act of Settlement. I do not advance this on hearsay ; I have seen it, in the course of my own reading, in a Treatise purposely written, and published, for the use of Catholic students in divinity ; and, there, a distinct preference is given to the Secular Power, on account of the nature, and priority, of its institution.

The immunities which were formerly claimed, and either granted, or acquiesced in, by Catholic Sovereigns, to ecclesiastical persons and property, have been long ago abrogated and set aside ; these are now, every where, equally obnoxious to the laws of the country in which they exist, with the persons and property of secular subjects. These immunities were founded on a principle of injustice, and often proved highly injurious to the cause of Religion, by encouraging immorality in those members of the priesthood, whose profligate dis-

dispositions dishonoured the dignified order to which they belonged.

I made a long residence of sixteen years in a Catholic country, on an intimate footing with Catholics of every description, viz. laymen, secular and regular priests ; and being addicted both to oral and literary research after knowledge, especially of matters concerning religion; considering it as an object of the highest importance to moral agents ; and feeling my mind, at an early period of life, struck with confusion at the numerous sects, all professing themselves Christians, tho' differing from each other in apparently material points ; I could not rest, till I had investigated all their several Tenets, Doctrine, and Discipline. Thus, you may easily imagine, with the opportunities I had, I became pretty thoroughly acquainted with the ground-work, and principles of the Catholic Religion ; and, therefore, think myself qualified to speak, positively, on that head : I therefore venture to assure your Lordships, that it contains no principle, that can possibly militate against the earnest petition of the Irish Catholics to be readmitted to the enjoyment of their Constitutional Rights. It contains no encouragement to immorality in its doctrine. The validity of sacerdotal absolu-

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tion depends upon the sincerity of repentance, in the penitent, as in the Established Church of England; where a general, tho' tacit, confession, forms an essential part of the Liturgy, with a subsequent absolution, pronounced by the officiating minister, on all occasions of public worship. Neither does the Church of England absolutely reject the efficacy of auricular confession, as is evident from the form prescribed for the visitation of the sick; and the sign of the cross forms a part of its baptismal ceremony.—I could carry this comparative resemblance much farther, between the two Churches; but it would be foreign to our immediate object, however amusing, or even instructive, it might be to Religionists of both Churches, by showing them how greatly their speculative tenets and observances are intitled to mutual indulgence, on account of their reciprocal approximation.

Great and serious apprehensions seem to be entertained, by the bigotted opponents of Emancipation, of danger from the opinion the Catholics hold of the Pope's Infallibility; it may not, therefore, be improper to explain, in as few words as possible, the nature and extent of this officia lInfallibility.

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The Legislative Power of the Roman Catholic Church, is considered as vested in their General Councils; in which the Pope, as the head and executive power, presides, either in person or by representation. The decrees, canons, and regulations, agreed to by these Councils, and confirmed by the Pope, constitute the *Normæ* by which he is to regulate his conduct in the government of the Church; and the practice of which he is obliged to enforce, according to their spirit rather than their letter, as he is vested, in his official capacity, with a right of dispensation, where occurrent circumstances may require the exercise of this high prerogative. In all these constitutional acts, if I may be allowed this expression, he is said to sit in the Chair of St. Peter; and partakes in the Infallibility, attributed to the General Councils, whose determinations are supposed to have been concluded under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost. But should the Pope deviate from this spirit and principle, in any of the ordinances he may promulge for the government of his spiritual kingdom, his infallibility ceases; obedience may be refused, and an appeal made to a future General Council: of which there have been more than one example

recorded in Ecclesiastical History. And some have so widely erred, as to have been brought to the bar of General Councils, declared Heretics, and deprived of their triple tiara.

These General Councils always consist of representatives, both ecclesiastical and secular persons, from all the national churches, appointed and sent, by the secular powers, to attend the Councils convened by the papal authority, either on his own option, with the advice of his cardinal counsellors, or an express application from other quarters, secular or ecclesiastic. No ecclesiastic has a right to attend these Councils, without the command, or permission, of his respective sovereign.— Have we not here, my Lords, a constitution of church government, not very dissimilar in principle and form to our own political constitution? Is there not a striking resemblance between our Parliaments and the General Councils? Is there not a secular infallibility attached to our Sovereign, in almost every particular resembling the spiritual infallibility of the Pope?

As to Purgatory, the peculiar patrimony of the Pope, and, in former times, a very productive property, I shall only say that, if there

there is such a place, I would much rather get into it, than into Hell: but I am afraid there is no such place; because I find no positive foundation for entertaining any such opinion in Scripture. But I shall, by no means, object to any other persons embracing this article of Catholic Faith. It is perfectly innoxious to society; as it is only intended to purge the soul from such blemishes as may attach to it, from the commission of such petty sins as do not amount to capital offences. I say, however, that the sale of indulgences, which has long caused so much scandal, never was universally approved of by the Catholic Church;* and has been publicly reprobated by several learned bodies or corporations. It carries no money, now-a-days, from distant countries to enrich the papal treasury at Rome; tho' it, now and then, puts a little money into the pockets of resident priests, for masses and prayers on behalf of the souls of relations and friends, who may have been fortunate enough to escape from the eternal flames of Hell; and I really believe that those who give, and those who receive, act bona fide; and strictly adhere to

* Indulgences do not extend to Hell: they are confined to the region of Purgatory.

the dictates of conscientious faith; and that in doing so they neither offend God nor man.

I am afraid, my Lords, that what I have just now said concerning Purgatory, is only a digression which had better been avoided; nor was it my intention, in addressing your Lordships, either to defend, or to blame the Catholic Religion; but only to explain certain circumstances, a misconception of which, far removed from reality, has created, in the minds of too many British Protestants, a groundless aversion to Catholic Emancipation. And I would fain hope that the elucidations I have given, will effectually confute and invalidate all those arguments I have heard, or read, from the time of the first introduction of the Catholic Petitions, originating in apprehensions of the inimical influence of the Pope over the minds of the Irish Catholics; especially while his person is held within the grasp of Bonaparte. And I am also inclined to flatter myself, that the facts I have established, cannot fail convincing the most prejudiced mind, that there is no principle in the Catholic mind, or Catholic religion, having the slightest tendency to disqualify the Irish Catholics for the full enjoyment of Civil and Political Liberty.

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If any danger could possibly arise from the Papal Influence, it is evident to me that it would operate with redoubled force on the Catholic mind, while they remain in their actual state of seclusion from their Constitutional Rights. I firmly believe, that every concession in their favour would infallibly diminish that influence, and that unconditional Emancipation would dissipate it entirely: and that this is the only security wise statesmen should require, or that the Catholics should grant.

To demand of the Catholics to acknowledge the King to be the Head of their Church, is to demand of them to renounce their religion. But, without any such acknowledgment on their part, the King possesses, in common with every other European Prince, the same temporal sovereignty over their Church, in his own dominions, that he does over the Established Church of England: our Kings do not inherit that spiritual supremacy over the Church, that was assumed, and tyrannically exercised, by that cruel persecuting madman, Henry the Eighth; who, in politics, morality, and religion, had no other object in view, than the abominable

gratification of his own whims, lusts, and passions.

The Veto is another bone of contention, which I apprehend has been suggested, by the proposers, from a full conviction that the Irish Catholic Prelacy could not accede to it; it is to demand of them to yield up a right they do not possess. The institution of Prelates, in the Catholic Church, is vested in the Pope exclusively; consequently no subordinate order of the Hierarchy can pretend to any right to make concessions on that head. But it may be obtained by application to the proper quarter; as was the case in Prussia, with respect to Silesia.

As to any danger to our Ecclesiastical Establishment, it would be puerile to admit of any apprehension, till such time as the Catholic Religion shall be found to have become the prevalent religion of the people; and have seated itself upon the throne. Against the one, the principles and prejudices of the adherents of the Established Church, and of the various sects into which the protestant religion is subdivided in Great Britain, form, apparently, an insuperable barrier: as does the formal fundamental contract by which the Crown

Crown is held, in virtue of the Act of Settlement, against the other.

For the Catholics, after Emancipation, to be able to effect any change disadvantageous to our Ecclesiastical Establishment, they must first obtain a majority in both Houses of Parliament. In this House considerably above three hundred Protestant Peers are already seated, by hereditary right. Ireland has not above eight Catholic Peers; and these can only aspire to a seat in Parliament, thro' the medium of occasional election, as one of the forty representatives of the Irish Peerage; a situation which, as it is held for life, must seldom become vacant; and, probably, at the rate of one or two at a time: and for a Catholic to gain admission, he must have a majority of the votes of his Protestant Brethren of the Peerage.

In the House of Commons, the Commons of Great Britain are represented by five hundred and fifty eight Protestant Delegates; Ireland by only one hundred. Let us suppose an extreme, and almost an impossible, case, that these hundred Irish Representatives should be all Catholics, what evil, I ask, could possibly arise, to the Establishment, from their Influence in the National Councils?

But for this to happen, the Catholics must have become the exclusive possessors of Irish property: which, I fancy, you will allow is not within the range of probability.

The Irish Prelates would acquire, by Emancipation, no right to sit in this House. A seat in the House of Peers is, by no means, attached to the Episcopal Dignity in virtue of their spiritual office; it is derived from the Baronial Tenure, by which they hold their Diocesal Lands of the Crown; and for which, I believe, they do homage to the King on their induction. So far back, if I recollect aright, as the end of the fourth, or beginning of the fifth century, the policy of Sovereigns led them to confer Military Benefices on Mitred Ecclesiastics, regular and secular; on Abbesses, as well as Abbots; in order to have a hold on their fealty, in spite of the extraordinary ecclesiastical immunities prevalent in those times. This obliged them to appear, in the field, at the head of their vassals, either in person or by deputies; and to attend their Sovereign's Councils; and perform all other feudal services, under the penalty of forfeiture. This attendance on the Sovereign's Councils, in those days, was considered rather as a badge of servitude; tho' a mutation of circumstances,

cumstances, in modern times, has converted it into a noble right or privilege; and, by the constitutional establishment of the political orders in our state, constitutes the House of Peers the Key-stone or main pillar of our Free Government. We stand at an intermediate distance between the Crown and the Commons. It is our interest, as well as our duty, to keep in the most perfect equilibrium the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, and the constitutional influence of the Commons. Were we to support the prerogative of the Crown, so as to allow it to accumulate a certain degree of unconstitutional weight and strength, despotism might ensue; and we ourselves become slaves. Were we to suffer the influence of the Commons to swell beyond its constitutional bounds, Democracy might be introduced, and our order be annihilated.

From what I have now said, it may be clearly inferred, that it is not from any immediate prospect of obtaining any considerable degree of Political Power, that the Irish Catholics are so anxiously soliciting re-admission within the pale of the Constitution, but merely to recover their long lost Political and Civil Rights; the want of which corrodes their

their feelings, and deprives them of a vast number of essential advantages and comforts, that attach exclusively to the possession of these important Rights: of which they were deprived, at a time when a newly introduced religion was contending with the old established religion for political power (a most unchristian contest), and as soon as the new religion had attained power to perform this act of irreligious injustice.

I am not afraid to assert that that contest was unchristian; and that act irreligious; because I am persuaded that the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Peers, who are here present, for whose enlightened minds I entertain the highest respect, will join me in affirming, that to fight for religion, is a criminal infraction of one of the essential principles of Christianity; and that the man who does so is not a Christian in his heart.

It might be defended on principles of worldly policy, because the acquisition of political power was the real object of the contending Factions, while religion was a mere pretence. But, my Lords, I am afraid that the Christian, who makes his religion subservient to his political views, has thrown his religion so far into

into the back ground, as to have entirely lost sight of its principle and precepts.

I thank God, that, at this present time, we are placed in so happy a situation, that Religion and Policy equally concur in urging us to consent to the request of the Catholic Petition. By doing so, we will remove, from our Legislature, the degrading imputation of deliberately authorizing Legal Oppression of the subjects of the Crown; and from the Established Church, the foul reproach of countenancing Legal Persecution. Persecution it certainly is, in the strictest sense of that term, to deprive men of their civil and political rights, on account of their religious tenets.

I cannot read our Catholic Penal Code without shuddering with horror at its Tyranny and Impiety!—Was it not an impious Law, which attempted to bribe the son to become a convert to the Established Church, by conferring upon him a right, on his apparent conversion, to deprive his father of his property?—Was it not impious, to hold out legal inducements to a son to become a member of the Established Church, by treading under his feet the Sacred Rights of Natural Feeling and Gratitude, in open defiance of a positive

Law of God, which ordains that a Son should honour his Father and his Mother? — What an honourable and precious acquisition, must such a proselyte have been to the Religious Association he had chosen to adopt! — Was his conversion a stage in his progress towards Heaven, or towards Hell? — Permit me, my Lords, to ask, what were the notions of Religion entertained by those Ecclesiastical Peers who did not cry out, and enter their protest against this Law, the very moment it was proposed?

I well know that many of these glaring errors have been corrected, during the present beneficent Reign; but I must assert, my Lords, that our Statute Book still remains sullied by many similar blots, that ought to be instantaneously erased by the hand of Political Wisdom, and Religious Charity. Let us recollect that GOD says, in Isaiah, “ Is not this “ the fast that I have chosen, to loose the “ bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy “ burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, “ and that ye break every yoke?”

Tho' I entertain very serious doubts of the propriety of incorporating any particular denomination of Christians with the Civil Government of a Country, to the exclusion of all

all others, still I hold it to be an axiom; that our Legislature, and our Executive Magistrates, ought always to consult the fundamental principles of the Apostolic Religion, as connected with the moral principle of our Free Constitution, whenever they are employed in the discharge of their respective functions. The first will correct their prejudices, and restrain their passions; the second will enlighten their understandings, and strengthen their judgment; and render their exertions honourable to themselves, and useful to their Country. And their combined operation would banish, in the course of a few years, every inconsistency, and principle of oppression, from our Political, Civil, and Criminal Codes.

At present, these are so voluminous, and our laws so numerous, and so belabyrinthed by partial repeals and emendations, that, in too many instances, they can scarcely be accounted rules of conduct. For such as God has been pleased to constitute the faculties of the human mind, no man is possessed of memory sufficiently capacious and retentive, as to be able to have them always present in his mind. And, surely, what I either do not know, or do not understand, can by no means regulate

regulate my conduct, tho' it subjects me to punishment.

The Law of God creates Sin, and the Law of Man creates Crime. But, the Ten Commandments; the Evangelical Precepts; the Religious, Civil, and Criminal Laws of the Jews, are so simple in their nature, and confined to such narrow bounds of plain expressive language, that any man, in full possession of his mental powers, may render himself master of them in a few weeks, and have them always present in his memory; or carry them about with him, in his pocket, if he doubts the fidelity of his retentive faculty.

Our Statute Book is an Augean stable, and ought to be cleansed. A million sterling could not be more profitably employed, than in effecting this useful and charitable purpose.

These reflections arose so naturally and forcibly in my mind, out of the train of thought into which I have been led, by the subject I am treating, that I unwittingly digressed into this species of episode; and now it is too late to recall it.

After having said so much as I have done, of Catholics and Catholicism in general, it may not be improper to speak, now, of the Irish Catholics in particular; against whom prejudice, ignorance, and bigotry, have uttered

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ed torrents of the grossest calumny, even in this House, as well as thro' the Empire at large. And I am truly happy to be able to assure Your Lordships, that every thing I shall advance on their subject, is the result of my own personal experience, and cool impartial observation, during somewhat more than a thirteen years residence in Ireland, from May 1797, to March 1811.

I went to Ireland in a military capacity, as Lieutenant Colonel of the Midlothian Yeomanry Cavalry, in which corps I continued to serve, there, till September 1800, when it was reduced ; our services not being considered as necessary in Ireland, or in any other part of Europe, to which this Loyal Corps had offered to extend them. I then connected my own private interests with those of the Irish people, by a purchase of property in the county of Meath ; and I have ever since lived on the most social and intimate footing, with all my neighbours, Protestants and Catholics, Laity and Clergy. And I am proud to boast, that I possess, at this moment, the cordial friendship of many the most respectable individuals of these several classes of men ; and which I should be very unwilling to forfeit or resign.

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As my religious principles impose on me, as an indispensable moral duty, neither to hate or despise any man because he differs from me in speculative points, whether in politics or religion, I was so fortunate as soon to conciliate the confidence of the Catholic Parochial Clergy, in the different quarters in which I had the command, (and I always was detached from regimental head-quarters, previous to, and during the Rebellion in 1798); and thro' their means, and with their zealous assistance, I found out the way, without any harsh acts of military exertion, to reclaim the deluded populace, and to re-establish peace and confidence throughout the districts committed to my care. In doing so, the chief difficulties I had to encounter, arose from the outrageous zeal of the loyal Orangemen, and active magistrates; whose red-hot exertions I was obliged to counteract. I managed this delicate point, however, in such a manner as not to give them any serious motive to be offended at my conduct; and we always kept on the best terms together. But I could not help lamenting that their wild Protestant-ascendancy zeal, rendered them the best Pioneers, that Conspiracy could possibly have wished to employ, in order to prepare the minds

minds of the people for general insurrection. By saying so, I intend no insinuation to the prejudice of the loyalty of their intentions; but I did, and still do, regret the political imprudence of their conduct; a disease of which they have not yet perfectly convalesced. My Lords, I give it as my confirmed opinion, that while that illegal association exists, internal quiet will never be universally established in Ireland. I am perfectly acquainted with the reciprocal feelings of the two parties; and I know that action always produces re-action, equally in the moral and physical world.

But not to enter into long and minute details on this subject, which would necessarily lead me into egotisms, which I wish to avoid, I will beg leave to inform your Lordships, in a few words, that even in those worst of times, I found the Catholic mind, tho' discontented with their political situation, very far from being generally disposed to rise up against Government; and the Clergy, every where I went, conscientiously loyal. I say conscientiously, because their loyalty could not possibly originate in gratitude, in the bosom of oppression; but must have rested solely upon a sense of moral and religious obligation. Give to God what is God's, and to Cesar what

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Cesar's, is as sacred a principle of the Catholic, as it is of the Reformed Religion ; though, in both, ambition has induced, and oppression has stimulated too many, often to deviate, in practice, from this evangelical injunction. Let us, My Lords, remove oppression, and we have nothing to fear from ambition in Ireland. The sole ambition of the Irish Catholic, at present, is to be restored, by legal means, to his long lost political and civil rights ; and to the full enjoyment of the British Constitution, which he admires and loves. And I must add, that it is fully as much the interest of the political monopolists, as it is of the Catholics, that this restitution should be effected without delay.

In Ireland, Emancipation is not merely a Catholic pretension, at the present day ; it has become a serious, and important Irish object. The Trial of the Delegates, in Dublin, last winter ; and the novel inroad made upon our English vocabulary, so far as it is connected with our Acts of Parliament, have given a general alarm ; and opened the eyes of the Irish Protestants ; and they are now rallying around the Catholic Question, in an orderly, deliberate, and legal array, as being intimately connected with their own personal security,

security, as well as with that of their property.

Let us not, My Lords, sport with their fears or their wishes; it might be a dangerous experiment. When interest, and feeling, begin to work upon and arouse the human passions; if not timely prevented, the explosion may be dreadful. But I would not, for the world, say all that occurs to me on this subject. But I feel great consolation from reflecting, that it is in our power to remove, at once, every principle of discontent, by a wise and speedy repeal of those unjust and noxious Laws that disgrace our Statute Book.

Repeal them, My Lords: Repeal them. And, by that single act, you will introduce a communion of interest, internal peace, and national prosperity; and give a triple strength to the British Empire, against the ambitious projects of our inveterate enemy; who, while he breathes, and has power, will never cease to persecute the free and independent government of Great Britain. And we must prepare for a long, strenuous, and burdensome resistance; in which the people must make great sacrifices. But to do so, the people must enjoy constitutional freedom; and be conscious of holding one common interest in

the preservation of the independence of the State.

To remove the childish apprehensions of those who tremble at the fancied danger, to the Church or State, from the introduction of Catholics into our National Councils, I thought it necessary to prove the impossibility of their ever forming a majority in Parliament; but, in justice to my Irish friends, I must say, that I know several among them, both Laity and Churchmen, whose presence here, or in the other House, would soon be considered, by their most violent opponents, as an object of exultation. Relieve the Irish Catholic from the heart-burning stigma of disloyalty, attached to his religion by our improvident unconstitutional laws; let him sit down in this House as a Peer of the Realm; and, certain I am, his liberality of mind, his natural and acquired talents, the acuteness of his understanding, the solidity of his judgment, his Loyalty to his King, and his attachment to the constitution, would soon render him the object of your admiration and esteem; and a deep regret, at his having been so long banished from our Councils, would become the predominant feeling of every member of this House.

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The Swiss Confederation, while it existed, was an incontrovertible practical evidence, that a Coalition of Protestant and Catholic Councils does no injury to that State, where a mutual and common interest unite them to each other.

The Electorate of Saxony is a striking existing example, that a Protestant Nation has nothing to dread from even a Catholic Government.

Catholic Canada, though but a recent conquest, remained faithful to its allegiance, when our Protestant Colonies, in its immediate vicinity, shook off their dependence upon the British Crown, and established an independent federal Republic, notwithstanding their British origin, community of language, and similarity of political and civil institutions; because they would not submit to the usurped authority of the British Legislature. And here it ought to be observed, that it was the unconstitutional assumption, and the intemperate obstinacy, of Parliament, at the instigation of Ministers, that drove the unwilling Americans into open rebellion, and dissevered the colonies, for ever, from the mother-country.

I wish to God that Ministers would take a lesson from the experience of their predeces-

sors ; and reflect, that an high-minded people may be goaded on, and exasperated, to desperation, by unjust and unmerited coercion. The Irish Catholics of the present day are conscious of no crime, to justify their exclusion from their Constitutional Rights ; and these they are determined to obtain. The means they use, and purpose using, to recover their rights, are legal and constitutional ; nor has any the slightest measure, hostile to Government, existence in their thoughts. But men are fallible ; and time, and constant irritation, may exhaust their patience. It is much easier to kindle a conflagration than to extinguish it. Government is not a Gulliver —nor is Ireland a Lilliputian Palace ; though, to judge from what has been passing in Ireland for some time past, I should be inclined to imagine, that the opinion of Government, and mine, on this subject, are far from coinciding. But I am far better acquainted with Ireland, and Irish men, than they are ; and I can foresee serious danger attending on an obstinate perseverance in the measures they have adopted for the management of Irish affairs.

I bear no enmity to Ministers ; but I love my Country ; and, therefore, I boldly speak
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the truth, however unpalatable it may be to them. I only wish to open their eyes, that they may see their errors, and change their system. If they follow my advice, they may, yet, command the gratitude of their Country : If they persist in their present plan, perhaps the day is not far distant, on which they may find themselves the objects of its execration. The scientific campaigns, the glorious achievements, the laurelled victories of a Wellington, will not ultimately save the Country, unless internal unanimity shall be established by Catholic Emancipation.

We have an enemy of no common stamp to contend with. And the character of the warfare in which we are engaged, bears no resemblance to the wars that were wont to be carried on in Europe, by a combination of certain States contending for the balance of power, against the petty ambition or cupidity of those, who wished to obtain a continental predominancy and influence over their neighbours, by a partial acquisition of territory and population ; who fought till they had exhausted their resources, both of men and money, and were then obliged to make peace, and retire within their ancient limits, till they could replenish their treasuries, and await for

a rising generation to recruit their armies. No:—Napoleon has swept all these powers from the face of the earth; and concentrated them in his own person. His progress has been like that of an unabating hurricane; he has every where levelled, with the dust, the resisting and non-resisting powers; but, instead of scattering, he collects; and every step he advances enriches his treasury, augments his armies, and increases his means of destruction, in almost a geometrical ratio.

Such is the man with whom we have to contend. A man possessed of Talents, Abilities, Sagacity, and Foresight, hitherto unparalleled; and driven on in his career to the goal he has proposed to himself, by a spirit of boundless ambition, and confidence in his own powers, and high destiny, as he terms it. His object is continually before his eyes; and he never entertains one moment's scruple concerning the means by which it is to be attained. He knows that he can never rivet the chains he has imposed upon the Continent, while Britain remains an Independent Power; and, therefore, our overthrow undoubtedly occupies his deepest meditations, keeps his thoughts in perpetual agitation, stimulates, and employs, all the powers

powers and resources of his active, malignant genius, in brooding over the means that may, sooner or later, effect this indispensable object of his rapacity and ambition. But his projects and exertions can never succeed, unless we betray our own interests by fomenting internal discontent; and preparing the minds of the people, by the imbecility of our Councils, to listen, in hope, to the flattering and deceitful whispers of Traitors, Conspirators, and French Emissaries; who, I am confident, are still present, and alert; ready to seize the first moment of Catholic despair, to commence, *à la sourdine*, their desperate and dangerous machinations against the State: And then we may repent of our obstinacy, when it is too late.

My Lords, I entreat Your Lordships not to misconstrue my language; I have thrown out no one single expression with a minatory intention. But I think it my indispensable duty, in discussing this important question, to point out, to the best of my ability, all the hidden rocks, shelves, and quicksands, through which our Helmsmen have to steer the vessel of the State, in the actual critical situation of Public Affairs. I have been long accustomed to think and reflect on the nature and operations

tions of the human mind ; and the consequent principles which ought to regulate the conduct of a Government, to which a Free People have entrusted the management of their National Affairs ; and the result has been a full conviction, that, in every Law that Parliament may present to the Crown, for its approbation, the people ought evidently to perceive that their individual interests are constantly respected, so far as it is not absolutely necessary to with-hold some of their individual rights, to promote the general security and welfare. I am also of opinion that Laws, when promulgated by constitutional authority, are obligatory on the subject ; and are to be obeyed, till they are repealed by the same authority by which they were enacted. And that the British People have no constitutional or legal right to interfere, by force, with Government, unless the Executive assumes the Legislative power, or the Legislature that of the Executive. Because, in these extreme cases, Government become traitors to the Constitution ; and the work of regeneration devolves, of right, to the people at large. If these opinions are erroneous, tell me that they are so, My Lords, and I will readily retract them, without obstinately relying on my own judgment.

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When we consider, that we have only a population of sixteen millions, to oppose to the whole population of the Continent, converted into an inexhaustible seminary of soldiers, compressed within the hands, and moving, as if urged by a strong elastic spring, at the nod, and subservient to the will, of our artful and inveterate enemy, how grateful ought we not to be to the Almighty, for having separated us from the Continent, by our insular situation! To this circumstance, under the Providence of God, are we exclusively indebted for the wealth and independence we enjoy; and for the hopes we have a right to entertain, that, in course of time, we may have it in our power to enable the enslaved Continent to break her chains, and throw off the galling yoke of Bonaparte.

But, to effect this grand and salutary purpose, we must change our plan of warfare, center our scattered forces, call into action all the mental energy and physical strength of the British Islands; leave these to the protection of our Navy, our Regular and Local Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomen; and sally forth, with every other man capable of carrying arms, to land on the Continent in that quarter where the greatest probability may exist

exist of raising a general insurrection, by the confidence our appearance, with a commanding force, would inspire. One campaign, thus undertaken, and directed by the scientific, military genius of a Lord Wellington, could, I think, scarcely fail of withering the accumulated laurels, with which the treachery and imbecility of his opponents, rather than his own military talents, have gradually encircled the vain-glorious brows of Bonaparte.* I

have

* This may perhaps, at first sight, be taken for merely an oratorial flourish; but, on mature consideration, it may possibly be found not to be so very distant from the region of realities as, to many, it may seem to be. The writer thinks it not impossible for circumstances to arise, in the course of events, which may suggest the propriety or even the necessity of some similar plan being adopted, as the only probable means of ultimately insuring our own independence, and the restoration of a balance of power in Europe.

Were Bonaparte to be foiled in his intended Russian Expedition, which is not quite impossible; if his opponent has military talents, and knows how to unite caution with courage, an opportunity might offer for an efficient effort, accompanied with great probability of success.

At present, we have too many irons in the fire; and many of our objects are too trifling, and too remote from each other, in proportion to our population and military strength, for us to be able to act, in any one of these several points, with that energy, which can make any serious impression. Our present system of warfare may tease, and retard our enemy's progress; but without the slightest prospect of ever effecting the only object we ought to have in view, viz. to undermine his extensive

have observed his whole military progress; and I hesitate not to affirm, that corruption, temerity, and numbers, are the only military tactics with which he is conversant. I could prove these two positions beyond contradiction; but the detail would be tedious, and take up too much of Your Lordships' time at the present hour. I will only add, that I shall not be surprised to hear of his temerity having led him into some inextricable scrape, if his opponent has the ability to take advantage of it. I cannot, however, quit this subject, without advising the General who shall oppose him in person, never to hazard a general battle, till he has drawn him far from his resources, and ensured an advantageous position; which he may be certain of doing, with patience and prudence.

Now,

extensive influence, and effect the final overthrow of his overgrown power. Had we sent, in time, a sufficient force to Spain to drive the French, at once, out of the Peninsula, the Spaniards would have now had a long breathing: their army would have been organized; and an efficient government established: we might, ere this, have left them to themselves; and our troops who are there, exhausting our treasure and shedding their blood, in a war of detail, might have been employed, elsewhere, on some object of important utility. This is the opinion of a military man, who has, for more than forty years, made that profession his study.

The hands of Kings are said to be long; and Bonaparte's are exceeding long; but, methinks, his capacious ambitious mind extends his views somewhat beyond their reach.

Now, My Lords, to return to the immediate object of discussion ; is it not obvious that, to enable us to act with the national energy and efficiency, which the urgency of public affairs absolutely demands, we must begin by removing every seed of internal heart-burning, discontent, and discord ? I now conclude by earnestly intreating Your Lordships to re-consider all my various arguments ; revolve them, leisurely, in your minds ; and, then, to determine whether I have, or not, evinced to your satisfaction, that constitutional principles, natural justice, christian charity, evangelical precepts, true policy, and the irresistible necessity of our political situation, with respect to ourselves, and the rest of Europe, do, or do not, combine to dictate a prompt and cordial acquiescence with the Irish Catholic Petition, for a Repeal of those Laws that separate them from the National Community ; and which place them in a condition, more painful than that of aliens, in their native country.

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I have said that I had not completed the picture of our Government at full length, still I have gone farther than what was necessary to prove, by its structure, that its principle tends directly to the widest possible dissemination of Political and Civil Liberty. Indeed no man can, for a continuance, enjoy the last, without being possessed of a due share of the first. Civil Liberty is indispensable to human happiness in a free state of National association, and by Political influence it can alone be preserved.

The division of our Political orders into three distinct, independent, deliberative bodies, each having a negative voice, that prevents the resolutions of the other two from becoming law, without a combined assent, were it possible that men's understanding and judgments should never be warped, by the passions, from the paths of rectitude and truth, the nature of our government would, uninterruptedly, insure the operation of its principle, in every act of legislation; because, from the Crown, to the smallest fraction of property to which the elective franchise is attached, each has a personal, or a representative

tive voice in the discussion, and enactment, of every Law ; and, consequently, an opportunity of defending their respective rights from being trodden upon by the others. Thus it is evident, that rights can only be lost by the folly of the Personal, or the corruption and ignorance of the Elective Representation.

This division and re-union of the Legislative power, and the separation and responsibility of the Executive Magistracy, form what I call the body and nature of the British Constitution ; and, hence, its principle emanates, and flows, naturally, as a river from its source.

The corruption of the Elective branch is the most dangerous to the liberties of the people ; but the only reform, that can have any useful tendency in the House of Commons, can be effected by no Law whatsoever. To have a pure and faithful representative body, the people must reform themselves, and become inaccessible to the influence of bribery. They must make it a rule never to vote for any Candidate, who is not possessed of real property, to such an amount as to render him independent ; and who, being a resident in their Borough or County, is perfectly known to them, as a man of knowledge,

ledge, honour, and probity. Then, and then alone, will the British People have a pure and dignified Representation.

Then will the Liberties of the people be secure ; the Constitution preserved undefiled ; the Executive supported, not upon party, but public principles, in the performance of its legal and constitutional duties ; and watched over, and counteracted, in every deviation from objects of public utility, without the virulent rancour of a party, brawling, and squabbling, for the distribution of the loaves and fishes ; and frequently counteracting the best intentions of Ministers, in order to seat themselves in their places. Measures, not Men, will then find invincible enemies, and opponents, in the Representatives of the Commons ; and the wheels of Government move smoothly along, while they keep the high road in the service of the State.

But, to preserve our Constitution in perfect health, it is requisite that the Crown, being only one single individual, should possess a certain degree of moderate influence in our public Councils, and that its Ministers should have a large portion of superior talents and abilities, not always attached to the possession of extensive property, or elevated rank. A

few of our Rotten Boroughs might be safely and usefully left at the disposal of the Crown, to enable it to introduce its Ministers into the House of Commons. And I think it might be advisable, to attach such liberal salaries to the ministerial situations, as should put it in their power to accumulate, while in office, a moderate independence for the remainder of their life. Such a regulation would be, in the long run, a real saving to the public; and a great encouragement to talents. It would, I think, contribute, forcibly, to stimulate the exertions of Ministers to preserve their situations, by a faithful discharge of their functions.* A frequent change of Ministers, and, consequently, of measures, is highly detrimental to the public weal; and particularly so with respect to our external connexions, and military operations.

* At present, they are only supported, and kept in power, by the spirit of party, prodigally paid for, and brought into Parliament, by unconstitutional means, and at an extravagant expence. I leave to the British People to guess who it is that pays the Piper. This could not happen, were not the people blind to their interests, and open to bribery. They are to blame, not the Ministers.







